



Society : Beaufort Players  
Production : God of Carnage  
Date : Saturday March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024  
Venue : Church of Ascension Hall  
Report by : Des Wilby

## Show Report

It was a pleasure to have stepped-in at the last moment to provide emergency cover for Beaufort Players production *God of Carnage*. Mike Smith, your District 2 NODA Representative, remains unwell but for now his NODA duties are being handled by other members of the London Regional Committee. This was actually my second visit, having previously greatly enjoyed *Blue Stockings* in 2022, and expectations for another quality production were high as a result!

*God of Carnage* is an extremely well-written play by Yasmina Reza that was first published in 2008. It is often described as a 'dark comedy' and the themes covered certainly resonate clearly today. This is the story of Veronica and Michelle (parents of Bruno) and Annette and Alan (parents of Ferdinand). The 11-year old boys get into a fight, Bruno loses two teeth when Ferdinand hit him with a stick and the parents decide to meet in the hope of resolving the matter. But was the meeting successful and how did the parents handle the situation?

Isobella Hatwell is to be congratulated in her first role as Director for Beaufort Players. This was a fabulous production and quite simply casting was impeccable. I can only describe the four cast members as being superb and faultless. The dialogue was realistic and the characters believable. From start to finish the amount of time, effort and attention to detail were obvious to see. I found the whole production to be highly polished, seamless and hugely entertaining. I hope you were able to enjoy the actual performances and, given the success here, I'm sure you'll be called upon for further directing roles in the near future!

Meg Lambie was outrageously funny as the slightly eccentric Veronica Vallon whose seemingly benevolent nature hid an overly judgemental nature. Trying to hold the moral 'high ground' at all times, Veronica's façade finally crumbled together with her pretentiousness. This was a fabulous role to portray and Meg was both at ease, and in control, throughout her convincing performance. Over-the-top facial expressions and excellent body language made Veronica the type of woman to ultimately avoid...

Julia Marques was terrific as Michelle Vallon, Veronica's wife. From the outset, this seemingly timid and downtrodden woman won sympathy from the audience. As the play progressed, and much to Veronica's surprise, Michelle became increasingly more vocal and opinionated. Gone was the submissive adherence to Veronica's will and in came a previously hidden uncouth nature. Another fabulous character to portray and so much scope to enjoy the part. Julia brought much humour to her performance and delivered wonderfully.

Craig Serventy gave an extremely strong performance as Alan Reilly, the stereotypical lawyer whose self-importance meant he didn't think, or care, whether his behaviour infuriated others. The constant use of his mobile, loud voice and total thoughtless attitude certainly raised eyebrows and ruffled feathers. Craig managed this entire fiasco with seamless precision allowing the fast-paced dialogue to simply flow. Ambivalent towards his son's actions, and openly reluctant to be attending the meeting, in some ways Alan was the most honest character in the play.

Cat Hannon was wonderful as Annette Reilly, the under-the-heel wife of her lawyer husband. Constantly on the brink of a panic attack, she couldn't even make it to Veronica and Michelle's front door at the first attempt, Annette wanted to 'do the right thing' but lacked confidence and support from her husband to achieve this goal. Being physically sick onstage due to this anxiety, deliberately dropping Alan's mobile into her rum and finally descending into drunkenness and hysterics – this was another excellent role and Cat gave a highly believable performance.

Ana Bretes and Thomas Cobb were responsible for Set Design and Construction. The single set of the Vallon's living room was elegantly furnished and provided an indication as to the social status.

Roger Dishley (Sound) together with Pete Balls and Jane Quill (Lighting) ensured that there were no technical issue to mention and that focus remained entirely on the performance.

Thomas Cobb is to be congratulated for delivering a comprehensive programme with information for the audience to enjoy reading. Isabella Hatwell's comments introduced the play and her thoughts were lovely to read. The cast biographies and rehearsal photos were great. It was also pleasing to see the prominent NODA reference.

This was another excellent production from Beaufort Players and it was a pleasure to have stepped-in at the last moment. Good luck in all your future endeavours and I'd be delighted to return again should this be required.

Des Wilby  
Deputy Regional Representative  
NODA London District 2